

and whose incomes were small, were reproached by an ecclesiastic with the fact that they lived in vice with their mothers, sisters, and daughters.¹ Marriages between persons related by blood are frequent in Corsica and are considered the most auspicious marriages.²

528. The Kabyles stone to death those who voluntarily commit incest and the children born of incestuous unions. The taboo, in their usage, includes parents and children-in-law, brothers and sisters-in-law, and foster brothers and sisters.³

529. In 1459 there died at Arras a canon, eighty years old, who had committed incest with his daughters and with a grand-daughter whom he had had by one of them.⁴

530. Where the line is drawn, and why. The instances show that the notion of incest is by no means universal or uniform, or attended by the same intensity of repugnance. It is not by any means traceable to a constant cause. Plutarch⁵ discussed the question why marriages between relatives were forbidden by the traditional mores of his time. He conjectured various explanations. Fear of physical degeneration is not one of them. We must infer that such consequences had not then been noticed or affirmed. We have found cases in which no taboo existed and cases in which close intermarriages are especially approved. An operation of syncretism, when different usages and ideas have been brought together by conquest and state combinations, must be allowed for. In some cases a great interest was thought to be at stake; in other cases no importance was attached to the matter. The mores developed under the notions which got control by accident or superstition. There was no rational ground for the taboo, and

none even
blindly connected with truth of fact, until the
opinion gained a
footing that close intermarriage was unfavorable
to the number
or vigor of the offspring. Unless that opinion is
accepted as
correct there is no reason for the taboo now.⁶-
Incest is, for us,

¹ Kostomarow, *Dom. Life and Customs of Great Russia*
(*russ.*), 154.

² Gubernatis, *Usi Nuziali*, 273.

⁴ Lea, *Inquis.*, III,

639.

⁸ Hanotean et Letoumeux, *Les Kabyles* III, 206. ⁶

Quaest. Rom 108.

⁶ Starcke, *Prim. JFam.*, 211,